15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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ground and cultivating and planting crops. Payment in the form of flour and tobacco was made for all work done, and the principle of 'no work—no pay' was strictly adhered to. Agriculture was an economic necessity in assisting them to develop from a nomadic existence to a communal life. Pay was later in the form of food grown on the station; in this way they became self-supporting, and profits were automatically returned to them.

When the time came for planting it seemed ridiculous to the nomad to bury good sweet-potatoes instead of eating them, for the relationship between seed and harvest had not occurred to them. About three months later, when the first crops were still immature I was surprised one morning to find that they had been scratched out and eaten. Two months of hard clearing and three months of cultivating had gone overnight. Disappointing as it was, the people could hardly be blamed, for it was against all their experience to leave good food to mature. For centuries, stray coconuts had drifted from the East Indies to the shores of Arnhem Land, but none took root, for this unexpected harvest from the sea was eagerly seized and eaten. Nomads consume all edible food at hand, and in bush life rarely wait for yams, fruit, and berries to ripen. Food is scarce, and they instinctively make the most of anything they find. I have seen them bring loads of popular cashew nuts into camp, stripping the trees and smashing their wide shady branches in an effort to get the last of the crop, and then gorge the nuts through day and night till all have been eaten. On rare occasions a number of turtle are caught, and though some could be kept alive and eaten later, they are killed at once, and the camp feasts and sleeps intermittently till the catch is finished.

We tried to explain that cows and goats were kept for their milk and not for meat, but nomads found it hard to sit and tend them day by day and yard them at night, when each

beast represented a potential feast. Tailing stock, and protecting them from dingoes whilst they grazed, was a foreign idea to Stone Age hunters, and if they were not watched, they would build each day a rough brushwood yard in the bush to prevent the stock wandering off for grass and water. Meanwhile the herdsman slept in the shade, and at sundown he brought the animals back to the station yards.

With two hundred nomads on the station, a simple system of sanitation was soon necessary. In the bush they never bother about this, for they live in small hordes, and camp in one place only long enough to eat the meagre food supply, and then move elsewhere. I have never seen Yulengor deliberately wash themselves, but they are so often in the water after fish or crossing creeks and swamps, that they do sometimes get wet. Their cleansing agents are sand and ashes in which they sleep and lounge, and these are fairly effective in removing body moisture and dirt. The predominating acrid odour in their hair, dillybags, and shelters comes mostly from the blinding smoke in which they cook, eat, and sleep.

Unfortunately most nomads take too readily to wearing left-off clothes. We did all we could to control the craze, and issued free soap and a yard of brightly coloured cloth to the men, and short skirts to the women. Our chief objection to the use of clothing is that it is passed from one to another, never washed, and when wet is allowed to dry on the body, thereby causing colds and pneumonia. Bush Yulengor wear nothing unless it be an occasional piece of bark or bunch of leaves attached to a waist-string. But when traders and adventurers introduced coloured cloth, blankets, and left-off clothing, they were eagerly acquired as ornaments, passed from one to another, worn till they fell to pieces, and except for accidental immersion, were never washed. Strange clothes have been seen, as when a man was seen in camp dressed in lady's floral Japanese pyjamas